



Montessori Borealis

A Juneau School District Optional Program

Referral Information for the Montessori Borealis Elementary Program

The Juneau School District Montessori program includes grades 1 – 8 and is open to children throughout the Juneau School District. No tuition is charged.

The Montessori Elementary (grades 1-6) is located with the Montessori Adolescent Program (grades 7-8) at Marie Drake. School bus transportation to Marie Drake is provided throughout the Juneau area.

In many ways, the Montessori elementary classrooms approach teaching and learning differently than do conventional classrooms. The Montessori approach works well for children with diverse backgrounds, strengths, and needs. We encourage you to bring the Montessori program to the attention of parents who may not search it out on their own.

For more information about the Montessori Elementary Program, feel free to call the teachers at: 523-1886 or arrange a visit to our classrooms.

Enrollment is coordinated through the Assistant Superintendent's office, with spaces filled by lottery. Children who are low income, low achieving, special education, or English language learners receive preferences in the lottery to help assure that the Montessori classrooms reflect the diversity in the Juneau School District. Special Education, English Language, and other educational services are provided to qualifying students in a manner consistent with other Juneau District schools.

Note that, by school board policy, students referred to Montessori or another alternative program by a school principal are counted as if they attended their boundary area school in the year for which the referral is made (next fall, in most cases). This means that students can be referred to an optional program without concern that this referral could result in the loss of a teacher for their neighborhood school.

When thinking about which children in your classroom could benefit from the Montessori program, you may want to keep the following in mind.

| Who Might Benefit from Being in an Elementary Montessori Classroom? | Why Would This Child Benefit? |
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| A child who has difficulty adapting to a new classroom and teacher each year, or who could otherwise benefit from a stable classroom environment from year to year. | The elementary classrooms are multi-grade (1/2/3 and 4/5/6) and children generally remain with the same teacher for three years. Teachers and children work across and within each classroom as well. This gives teachers and families an opportunity to get to know each other well, develop community, and work together from one year to the next. |

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| A child who could benefit from the opportunity to work with children of different ages or academic levels | The multi-age design of a Montessori classroom allows children to work with others who are older and/or younger than they are. Children have the opportunity to be leaders and followers, both teach and learn, and to socialize with children of different ages. |
| A child who tends to work at a different pace (either faster or more slowly) than their classmates | Most work in the Montessori classroom is designed to be completed at a child's pace, and few children are working on exactly the same thing at the same time. |
| A child who needs a different approach to learning either reading or math | <p>Writing is heavily emphasized as a precursor and support to reading. Reading in a Montessori classroom follows a strongly phonics-based approach. This approach could be just what a particular child needs to "get over the hump" and become a successful reader.</p> <p>Mathematics in a Montessori classroom involves the use of materials that have been specifically designed to teach particular concepts. These materials are unique to Montessori and may be particularly beneficial to children who learn best with concrete hands-on materials, or who have struggled with other approaches.</p> |
| Children who sometimes have a difficult time with transitions and/or get engrossed in a project and frustrated when it is time to move on to the next scheduled activity | In a Montessori classroom, the school day is organized around an uninterrupted 3-hour "Great Period", during which children focus on academic subjects. Children plan and select their work and the order in which that work will be done, and can spend the time they need to complete a project. |
| A child who gets enthusiastic about a subject and wants to research it in more depth than there is typically an opportunity to do in the classroom | Children in the Montessori elementary classrooms have the opportunity to select and explore subject areas in depth. Depending on the subject and the child, the result of this exploration may take the form of a research paper, map, poster, science experiment, art or other project. |
| A child who is interested in music and would like to learn to play an instrument, but whose family is unable to provide them with private music lessons | Starting in 4 th grade, children in Montessori Borealis select and learn an orchestral instrument as part of the classroom music program. There is no charge to the students for this instruction. Younger children learn recorder as part of their comprehensive music program. |
| A child who is interested in the arts | The Montessori environment integrates music, drama, movement and graphic arts throughout the curriculum and intensive periods over the year. |

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| <p>A child who splits their time between two different households, and would benefit from district-provided transportation to school from each household</p> | <p>With district-provided bus transportation to the Montessori classrooms from every neighborhood in town, a child who resides in two different households will be able to ride the school bus to school from each.</p> |